



In Memoriam: James Weir OBE

As many of you will be aware, James Weir OBE, co-founder and Chairman of Jeakins Weir passed away in September at the age of 89. The directors of Jeakins Weir and their families would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for the messages of condolence and support they have received.

James founded the business with his trusted colleague, John Jeakins, in 1973, and took great pride in seeing the business grow to become a leading construction firm in the East Midlands.

James was born in Aberdeen and grew up in Edinburgh before moving to the Midlands in his 40s. He lived a full and meaningful life, and was involved in dozens of business, sporting, political, educational, military, religious and voluntary groups. In his 89 years, he touched many lives with his service and support in Rutland, the East Midlands and Scotland.

As a passionate advocate for Rutland, James became the first Chairman of the newly independent Rutland County Council and Vice Lord Lieutenant of Rutland. At the same time as building a successful business at Jeakins Weir, he committed his passion and support to many other causes close to his heart. He was Commandant of the Army Cadets, President of Rutland Scouts and Rutland Sailing Club, Governor of several of Rutland schools, Trustee of Peterborough Cathedral Trust and of Oakham School, board member at Anglian Water, and Committee member and former county chairman of ABF The Soldiers' Charity.



James will be remembered by family and friends as the consummate gentleman, a generous host and loving family man. He maintained a deep commitment to Jeakins Weir, and came into the office almost every day, well into his 80s. He has left a lasting legacy in so many walks of life, and will be greatly missed by everyone who knew him.

Note from Editor:

This is our only edition of the newsletter for 2020. Given the extraordinary times, we took the decision to delay first the Spring issue and then the Summer issue. Therefore, you'll see stories from throughout the year. Happy Christmas and we wish all our readers a happy, healthy and successful 2021.

More homes on the way for Northamptonshire

Toms Close is a positive for the local community

Jeakins Weir is currently working on many sites across Northamptonshire involving the construction of houses, garages, flats and assisted-living bungalows for Northampton Borough Council.

Particular progress has been made at Toms Close in Collingtree with the recent completion of a development of 21 modern and spacious family homes. This project was set in an already developed residential cul-de-sac in the small Northamptonshire village.

Alistair Weir, Managing Director of Jeakins Weir, said:

“ Toms Close has been transformed and is a great place for new residents to call home. We are proud of the 21 new homes and of our partnership with the housing provider.”

Councillor Jonathan Nunn, Leader of Northampton Borough Council, said:

“ These homes have been built as a part of NBC and NPH’s ambitious housing programme, where we’ve committed to building over 1,000 new homes over the next ten years – a target we expect to significantly exceed. We believe that residents deserve high quality, modern homes and this development really delivers on that. We’d like to thank our contractors and everyone at NPH for this fabulous result.”



Life under lockdown at Jeakins Weir

Adaptability and safety-first approach keep essential building projects on track

Covid-19 has dominated all of our lives for most of this year. For the construction industry, the impact has varied widely, depending on the nature of individual building projects, their scale and location. Research conducted by Constructionline among its members found that 87% of businesses have been affected in some way, with 62% saying operations had been suspended as a result of Covid-19. In many cases, main contractors had to close sites, while other projects were put on hold or even cancelled, due to the restrictions in place.

Against this backdrop, Jeakins Weir is extremely proud to have been able to continue working on most of its sites, while prioritising the health and safety of its clients, employees and the public. All decisions about maintaining operations during the pandemic were predicated on having strict protocols in place to safeguard health and wellbeing, in full compliance with government advice.

Throughout the crisis, Jeakins Weir people demonstrated their adaptability, diligence and 'can-do' attitude – enabling the company to continue delivering its vital projects.

Alistair Weir, Managing Director of Jeakins Weir, said: "In the construction industry, we are accustomed to dealing with crises. When the pandemic struck, we worked closely with our clients, suppliers and staff to develop robust plans to keep people safe and mitigate the risks of the virus, while maintaining our operations wherever possible."

"We do so much of our building work for schools, hospitals and social housing providers – the places where key workers work – so we were keen to maintain progress on these essential projects."

Alistair Weir, Managing Director, Jeakins Weir

Site manager's perspective

“As we have worked through the pandemic it has certainly been a new challenge, initially with some trepidation as we implemented new working methods on site, new hygiene regimes in the office, and welfare measures to keep our colleagues and contractors safe. But with social distancing and other good protective measures, it has become a positive experience.

“We have managed to keep progressing on site with the contractors and suppliers that have remained operational during the lockdown. With some materials and trades being closed, we have had to work smartly by re-sequencing certain aspects of the build, while still making steady progress heading into the new normal.”

Jeremy Biggs, Site Manager

What has it been like working for Jeakins Weir during the pandemic?

It's been very different, but reassuring to see all the safety measures in place. It's been strange getting used to videoconference meetings, but I believe many in the industry have adjusted well to the change – and it could be the way forward. There have been a few issues with the supply chain, although we have still been able to make good progress on our projects. With the government clarification of our sites being classed as "key" work, I was still able to visit sites as and when needed.

Ben Williams,
Assistant Quantity Surveyor



**Face Masks
Must Be
Worn!**

**CONSTRUCTION
SITE**

Keep on building

How were operations at Jeakins Weir impacted by the crisis?

Construction projects: Most sites remained open and construction work continued as planned, with strict Covid-19 safety procedures in place.

Repairs & maintenance: Most work was suspended during the height of lockdown. Only urgent or critical repairs were carried out. Since then, systems have been implemented to safely continue repairs and maintenance, and to clear the backlog. All maintenance teams are now working as usual, using the correct PPE and observing social distancing.

Head office: All staff worked effectively from home throughout the lockdown. A gradual return to the office is now being implemented for those who wish to, with H&S-compliant social distancing measures in place.

A decade of putting people first

IIP accreditation confirms Jeakins Weir is a great place to work

Jeakins Weir has received the “We invest in people” accreditation from Investors in People (IIP) for the tenth year running. This accreditation demonstrates the value Jeakins Weir places on making work better for everyone, and building a stronger, healthier and happier society.

Paul Devoy, CEO of Investors in People, said: “Being accredited with ‘We invest in people’ is a remarkable effort for any organisation, and places Jeakins Weir in fine company with a host of organisations that understand the value of people.”

Gaining the accreditation requires a thorough assessment of the company and its working practices, which includes gathering feedback from staff on how they feel about the company and what it can do to improve. In the past year, Jeakins Weir has revised its company values to make them more relevant to the business and its service delivery.



What part of your job has changed most as a result of Covid-19?

It's mainly the face-to-face colleague interaction, which has obviously been reduced down to nothing. In a typical 9-5 style job, that's the biggest part of a working day spent with colleagues, who we would call friends. It will be nice to see everyone again; we will need a day to catch up on each other's year!

Sophie Lindsay,
Marketing and Bid Manager

How have you managed to juggle work and home priorities?

Working at home was strange initially, but I do have remote access to my office computer so I can work from home, exactly as I would in the office. I have made sure that I have a similar routine to when I worked in the office, which does help to keep me motivated.

Christina Clarke,
Buyer

Working from home worked well for me. My grown-up daughter was also working at home, and we both adapted well to the new routine.

Tracey Tregidga,
Team leader, Administration

Obviously, I had a lot less interaction with my team. That made decision-making a lot slower, and it was harder to get information from the client. We are social animals, and while I enjoyed the peace and quiet, I missed having other people in the office with me. If I phoned a tenant to make an appointment, it was often very apparent that I was the only 'outside' person they'd spoken to in a few days, and the conversation was therapy for both of us.

Ian Laing,
Officer Manager, Cromer

Looking to the future: What do you think life after lockdown will be like?

It will be very different, but having been in the office a few times lately I don't have any concerns. We will need to social distance and clean everything regularly, but I don't mind that if it keeps us all safe. The office is set up nicely for us returning to work and all of the procedures are in place to keep us safe.

Lisa Nicolson,
Administrator



Corby Technical School receives a makeover

Remodelling project is close to home

Jeakins Weir has completed a major remodelling project, as well as installing a MUGA and modular changing rooms, at Corby Technical School. The co-educational secondary school is one of a group of Academy schools run by Brooke Weston Trust. It is also located close to Jeakins Weir's Corby HQ.

The scope of works included adapting two existing offices to classrooms, kitchen alterations, upgrading two

classrooms to science laboratories, and upgrading external dining area.

The projects were procured using the Scape Regional Construction framework. As a framework partner, Jeakins Weir provides construction services for public-sector projects in the Midlands, South East region.

Jeakins Weir Framework Manager, Tony Shipley, said:

“ The breadth of skills, trades and expertise we have within the business means we are ideally positioned to fulfil the varied demands of this framework. It’s very rewarding to be supporting the work of our vital public services in the area.”

In 2009 Jeakins Weir worked for Brooke Weston Trust at another senior school in Corby – the Brooke Weston Academy – building a £3 million Arts and Media Centre Extension.

Bags of support for two good causes

During the Covid-19 crisis, Contracts Manager James Banaszak and his daughter Phoebe donated bags full of shopping to the Raunds Food Bank. The two were keen to help struggling families during this difficult time, and the local food bank provided the perfect opportunity.

Phoebe said:

“ I wanted to help people that are less fortunate, because some people aren’t lucky enough to have food and nice stuff. We are lucky to have nice meals cooked for us and puddings.”

The Head Office team has also recently provided food, gifts and monetary donations to the Corby Christmas Project - a care package fundraiser to

enable Corby school families to enjoy a lovely Christmas after a difficult year.

Sophie Lindsay, Marketing and Bid Manager at Jeakins Weir, says: “Like James and Phoebe, people from across



Jeakins Weir have been doing whatever they can to support others in these challenging times. We’d like to say a big ‘thank you’ to everyone who has given up their time to help our local communities.”

Bassingbourn school project gets top marks

Jeakins Weir continues school improvement works in Cambridgeshire

Bassingbourn Community Primary School in Royston has a new single-storey, four-classroom extension. The stunning new building, which was completed by Jeakins Weir in July, features a large practical room, a group room, toilets, locker space and a plant room.

The £1.8m project for Cambridgeshire County Council also involved significant internal alterations to the school, including the installation of new kitchen equipment and the creation of a new classroom. Outside, there is a new playground, extra car-parking spaces and 40 new bicycle spaces, as well as newly planted trees and landscaping. Bassingbourn is a village school adjacent to Royston Heath, with approximately 270 children on roll in ten classes.

Jo German, Education Capital Projects Officer at Cambridgeshire County Council, said: **"The team have been brilliant and I really appreciate the dedication and skills they have brought to the job, especially James Banaszak. He is great to work with."**

In September, Jeakins Weir began another contract for Cambridgeshire County Council. This is an extension and refurbishment project at Spring Common Academy in Huntingdon – a school for pupils with special needs aged between 3 and 19. The work involves significant internal alterations and reconfiguration, as well as the construction of a new extension.



Double degree success

First-class honours for two dedicated team members

Congratulations to David Sinclair and Richard Prime who have received first class university degrees. Their outstanding results are testament to the hard work and dedication they put into their studies, alongside their normal duties at Jeakins Weir.

David Sinclair received a BSc(hons) in Quantity Surveying from Birmingham City University. "I am so pleased to have completed my degree with first class honours, knowing all the hard work has paid off. I am very grateful and appreciate all the support I have been given. Everything I have learned throughout my degree has given me the technical skills to transfer to live projects."

Richard Prime received a BSc (Hons) in Construction Management from De Montfort University. He said: "I'm very grateful for the opportunity to complete this qualification, and am really pleased with the result in what has been a challenging final year. I'm looking forward to continuing to develop in my job role and hope to gain accreditation with CIOB in the not-too-distant future."

About Jeakins Weir:

Jeakins Weir is a Corby-based construction company operating throughout the Midlands. Its operations cover three main areas: Main Contracting, Responsive Repairs and Maintenance (for council owned properties and housing associations) and Property Development. The business was formed in 1973 and is still privately owned. Today Jeakins Weir employs 200 people across the business.

Over the past 47 years Jeakins Weir has built, renovated and extended many hundreds of schools, hospitals, leisure facilities, offices, houses and other public buildings in the region. It currently has long term Responsive Repair contracts with housing associations and councils located in Norfolk, Northamptonshire and Leicestershire representing nearly 20,000 homes.

For further information visit: www.jeakinsweir.co.uk

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